

REPORT
OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
IN COMPLIANCE WITH

A resolution of the Senate of the 10th instant, calling for a statement of the amounts of silver purchased for re-coinage; also, the reasons for the difference of the prices paid at Philadelphia and New Orleans for the silver re-coined.

FEBRUARY 17, 1855.—Referred to the Committee on Finance and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
February 15, 1855.

SIR: In obedience to a resolution of the Senate of the 10th instant, requesting the Secretary of the Treasury "to communicate to the Senate a statement showing, 1st, the amount of silver purchased by the department for re-coinage at the United States mint at Philadelphia during the year 1854, and the price paid therefor, and a similar statement in regard to the branch mint at New Orleans; 2d, the reasons for any difference of price which may have been paid for silver re-coined at said mint at Philadelphia and branch mint at New Orleans," I have the honor to report that, 1st, the amount of silver purchased for re-coinage at the mint in Philadelphia during the calendar year 1854 was \$2,387,758 72, and that the amount purchased for like purpose at the branch mint in New Orleans in the same year was \$1,305,997 95.

The price paid for the silver at the two places was the same, namely, \$1 21 per ounce of standard fineness until the 25th of June, 1855, when, whilst that price was continued at New Orleans, a notice was issued by the director of the mint, with the approbation of this department, increasing the price of silver delivered at the mint to \$1 22 or to \$1 22½, according to certain known variations in the coins representing that fineness. On the 20th of December, 1854, the price was likewise increased at New Orleans, and it is now again the same at the two places. At this price the department is just advised of there being \$500,000 on its way to New Orleans.

2d. The reason for the temporary difference in the price, authorized to be paid at the respective places, was the failure of the supply at the one, and its superabundance at the other. This difference in the condition of the two establishments arose on the one hand from the far greater capacity of the mint for coinage than the branch mint, and the greater demand for the new coin in Philadelphia, and the region of

country within its reach; and on the other, from New Orleans being the point most convenient for the introduction of silver from Mexico; and in consequence of the deficiency at Philadelphia and the accumulation at New Orleans, two millions of the silver purchased at the latter, and which could not be coined there, were sent to the former, and at a considerable expense.

Notwithstanding the inequality of price at New Orleans referred to during a portion of the year 1854, and the transfer of \$2,000,000 to Philadelphia, it is understood that the branch at New Orleans has been kept fully at work; and there is at this time more than a million of the new coin on hand at the latter place beyond the demand for the purposes of change, and which cannot be put into circulation but upon the department assuming the expense, as it has already done to some extent, of its transmission to points in the interior.

I have the honor to be your most obedient servant,

JAMES GUTHRIE,

Secretary of the Treasury.

Hon. JESSE D. BRIGHT,

President pro tem. United States Senate.